CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 13 September 2001, at 10.20 a.m.

President Mr. Roberto Betancourt Ruales (Ecuador)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 888th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, we have been deeply shocked by the deliberate acts of terrorism that occurred on Tuesday in New York and Washington, causing the deaths of thousands of innocent people and immense material damage. These atrocious acts call for unequivocal condemnation. We share the opinion of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who stated in this connection: "No just cause can be advanced by terror". On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament I wish to extend my profound condolences to the people and the Government of the United States.

At this time I should also like to state that the Government and people of Ecuador are profoundly shocked and join in the firm condemnation of the terrorist attacks that struck a blow against peace and security in that country.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I now ask you to rise and observe a minute of silence.

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I now give the floor to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Distinguished colleagues, on Tuesday, 11 September 2001, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan made the following statement condemning terrorist attacks in the United States:

> "We are all traumatized by this terrible tragedy. We do not know yet how many people have been killed or injured, but inevitably the number will be high. Our first thoughts and prayers must be for them and for their families. I wish to express my profound condolences to them, and to the people and Government of the United States.
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> "There can be no doubt that these attacks are deliberate acts of terrorism, carefully planned and coordinated - and, as such, I condemn them utterly. Terrorism must be fought resolutely wherever it appears.
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> "In such moments, cool and reasoned judgement is more essential than ever. We do not know yet who is behind these acts, or what objective they hope to achieve. What we do know is that no just cause can be advanced by terror."

Yesterday, the Secretary-General addressed the Security Council at the meeting held under what he described as "exceptionally grave circumstances". Responding with shock and revulsion at the "cold-blooded viciousness" of the terrorist attacks in the United States, Mr. Kofi Annan called on all countries of the world to join forces to root out those responsible.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

"All nations of the world must work together to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. Our host country, and this host city, have been subjected to a terrorist attack which horrifies us all", the Secretary-General said. "We do not yet know the full extent of the damage, but it seems certain that thousands of people have lost their lives and many have suffered dreadful injuries."

The Secretary-General pointed out that "a terrorist attack on one country is an attack on humanity as a whole".

Condemning the attack and those who planned it in the strongest possible terms, Mr. Kofi Annan extended "our most profound sympathy" to the victims, to their loved ones, and to the people and Government of the United States. "More than that, we must express our solidarity with the Government and people in this hour of trial", the Secretary-General said.

Distinguished colleagues, as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, I would like to join my voice with those who condemn the perpetrators of this barbaric act of terrorism and who insist that there is no justification for this criminal act and that the perpetrators should be brought to justice. I would like to express my deep condolences to the Government of the United States, to the American people and to the families and relatives of the innocent victims.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank Mr. Petrovsky for having read out the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on terrorist attacks perpetrated in the United States. Would any delegation wish to take the floor on this matter?

I now call on the distinguished representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Enrique Vega.

Mr. VEGA (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the way in which you have been conducting our work and to assure you of the full backing of Chile in your endeavours.

Chile has requested the floor at this plenary meeting in its capacity as pro tempore secretariat of the Rio Group, a consultation mechanism comprising Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Rio Group issued a communiqué yesterday on the terrorist attacks perpetrated in the United States , which reads as follows:

> "Given the reprehensible terrorist acts that today have struck various cities of the United States and have caused massive loss of life, the Rio Group expresses its utmost condemnation of those who have perpetrated these barbaric acts and those who instigated them. "We likewise express our full solidarity with and support for the Government and

(Mr. Vega, Chile)

people of the United States of America and we express our hope that the international community will cooperate actively and resolutely in identifying those involved in these acts of terrorism and those who sponsored the preparation and perpetration of acts of this kind. We trust in the rapid, united and concerted action of all Governments in the world so that there may be no impunity for these crimes of international terrorism and that the rules of international criminal law are imposed.

"Through the pro tempore secretariat and the troika of the Rio Group, comprising the foreign ministers of Chile, Colombia and Costa Rica, the Rio Group will continue to monitor the development of these events and stands ready to consult on special coordinated action by member States, if the circumstances render such action advisable.

"Santiago, 11 September 2001."

Mr. President, I should like to ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Chile, Ambassador Enrique Vega, for his statement on behalf of the Rio Group and for the words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the Ambassador of Belgium, the representative of the European Union, Ambassador Jean Lint.

Mr. LINT (Belgium) (translated from French): The Council of the European Union, meeting yesterday in special session, made the following statement:

"The Council of the European Union expresses its horror at the terrorist attacks of 11 September in the United States. The Council stresses its complete solidarity with the Government of the United States and the American people at this terrible time and extends its deepest sympathy to all the victims and their families.

"These horrendous acts are an attack not only on the United States but against humanity itself and the values and freedoms we all share. The life and work of our open and democratic societies will continue undeterred.

"The Union utterly condemns the perpetrators and sponsors of these acts of barbarism. The Union and its member States will spare no efforts to help identify, bring to justice and punish those responsible: there will be no safe haven for terrorists and their sponsors.

(Mr. Lint, Belgium)

"The Union will work closely with the United States and all partners to combat international terrorism. All international organizations, particularly the United Nations, must be engaged and all relevant international instruments, including on the financing of terrorism, must be fully implemented.

"The Council of the European Union has requested all Europeans to observe three minutes of silence on Friday, 14 September, at noon. The European Union has declared 14 September 2001 a day of mourning."

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the European Union and Ambassador of Belgium, Mr. Jean Lint, for reading the statement of the Council of the European Union.

I now call on the distinguished representative of Australia, Ambassador Luck.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): Mr. President, this is the first time I am taking the floor during your presidency, and I do so on behalf of the New Zealand delegation as well as my own. May I say that we are grateful to you for your efforts. You can count on our support.

Like others in this Conference, I wish to record the disbelief and shock of Australia and New Zealand over the events in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on Tuesday. Our peoples share the sense of outrage and pain, especially for the loss of so many innocent lives. Our thoughts are with the American people and with the American delegation in this Conference as they grapple with this unspeakable tragedy.

We wish to convey our deepest sympathy to all those who have been affected by this pernicious act. This attack has an impact on all civilized nations and peoples and, of course, we are deeply saddened to know that there are likely to have been many of our own nationals directly affected. Terrorism in any shape or form will not advance just causes. We are resolved to work with all countries to do whatever is necessary to rid ourselves of threats to peace and the devastation of terrorism. The international community must work together to find who has been responsible and to punish them.

One of the many indelible images of the last few days has been television pictures of numbers of ordinary people proclaiming in their disbelief that the world had somehow changed. The New Zealand and Australian delegations would feel much more confident about interpreting and facing the uncertainties evident in their anguish if our multilateral institutions were working well. Regrettably, that cannot be said of this Conference, and the tragedy of the last days underscores the opportunities we have missed by not proceeding on the basis of what we had all known to be the best achievable way forward, namely the Amorim package. Those few who stood so steadfastly against this must surely question the wisdom of that posture. It would be unconscionable now for this Conference not to return in January with immediate resolve to agree a work programme on the basis of those best efforts and to get down to work with a sense of urgency.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and for his words addressed to the Chair.

I now call on the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador Christopher Westdal.

Mr. WESTDAL (Canada): Mr. President, I take this occasion to express Canada's horror at this week's scenes of evil incarnate in New York and Washington, which our Prime Minister called "a cowardly and depraved assault - an offence against the freedoms and rights of all civilized nations".

I express our sympathy and condolences for the victims, emotions that we feel personally.

I express our solidarity with the American people - our colleagues, our friends, our neighbours - closest neighbours - in these days of pain, loss and grief.

I express our active commitment to help them. With blood - literally. With emergency accommodation (some 30,000 stranded travellers have been billeted in Canada this week). And with moral and practical support.

I express as well our duty and determination, together with them and the rest of the civilized world, to combat the evil roots of these atrocities, bilaterally, multilaterally, relentlessly, shoulder to shoulder in this and all other settings.

Mr. TAWFIK (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak has condemned in the strongest possible terms the perfidious terrorist act to which the United States fell victim a couple of days ago. He expressed the condolences of Egypt, the Government of Egypt and the people of Egypt to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of the United States. I would like to emphasize that this criminal act was not directly solely against the American people; it was directed against the whole of humankind.

Mr. VALLE FONROUGE (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me to express our appreciation for your work and to assure you of my country's support in working to attain your goals.

Mr. President, on behalf of the permanent representative of Argentina to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Horacio Solari, who at this time is travelling to Buenos Aires, and on behalf of the Argentine delegation I should like to express our deep shock and grief at the tragic events which occurred the day before yesterday in the United States.

My Government has decreed national mourning and the national flag will be flying at half-mast for three days. We should like to express our grief at this tragedy and, once again, to convey our solidarity with the victims and our support for the Government of the United States

(Mr. Valle Fonrouge, Argentina)

of America, following the perpetration of these barbaric acts. These most heinous deeds sound a necessary warning to all of us. We reiterate our deepest condemnation of these attacks and our utter repudiation of any form of terrorism, one of the scourges of today's world.

Mr. LANGELAND (Norway): Mr. President, allow me to join you and other speakers in expressing our deepest sympathy and condolences to the United States and in strongly condemning the barbaric act of terrorism. In this respect, I would like to quote our Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, who, following the terrorist attack, said: "This is an attack against the United States of America and the American people, but it is also an attack against open, democratic society. All democracies now have an obligation to join in an uncompromising struggle against international terrorism." Through NATO, Norway is a close ally of the United States. On behalf of the Norwegian people and Government, I would like to express our strong solidarity with the American people and Government.

Mr. NYIKOS (Hungary): Mr. President, the heart of democracy stopped for a moment two days ago - but only for a moment - because of the deep shock it suffered from the most barbaric and evil act of terrorism ever known to humankind. But this heart that beats in everyone of us has not stopped for ever, as was intended by some creatures. To the contrary: it restarted from its own force, from its own vigour. Fortunately, the values we believe in are stronger, the friendships that connect us are much stronger than any of the forces which try to destroy them.

Mr. President, on behalf of my Government, we would like to express our sincere condolences to the people of the United States of America, to the relatives of the vic[illegible]rom all over the world, and also to our colleagues and dear friends at the United States Mission and to their families. Our heart is with them, our prayers go out to them. God be with us.

Mr. CHUNG (Republic of Korea): First of all, I should like to extend my delegation's gratitude and congratulations on your successful and skilful management of the business of the Conference as its President.

Mr. President, with your permission, I should like to read the statement issued by my Government's spokesperson last Tuesday:

> "The Government and people of the Republic of Korea strongly condemn the heinous terrorist attacks on NATO United States facilities, such as the New York World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in Washington DC. We pray for the peaceful repose of those who perished at the hands of these terrorist attacks, and extend our deepest condolences to their bereaved families. We further hope for the speedy recovery of all those injured, hoping that the American people will overcome this tremendous catastrophe with unyielding courage. We stand ready, as a close ally of the United States, to provide all necessary assistance. The Government of the Republic of Korea joins the United States and other countries in rooting out terrorist attacks and will spare no efforts in this endeavour."

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, it is sad that the first time I take the floor under your presidency should be on this sad and tragic occasion. Yesterday, hours after the tragic events in New York and Washington, the President of Pakistan sent a message to President Bush, which read as follows:

"The people and the Government of Pakistan deeply mourn the unprecedented loss of innocent lives in the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. We share the grief of the American people in this grave national tragedy. We strongly condemn this most brutal and horrible act of terror and violence. The world must unite to fight against terrorism in all its forms and root out this modern-day evil. At this moment of shock and tragedy, I convey to you, to the bereaved families and the American people our most profound sympathy and condolences."

The Government of Pakistan also issued a statement, which read as follows:

"The Government of Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, which have caused great loss of innocent lives. The people of Pakistan are deeply shocked by these heinous acts of terrorism. They share the deep sorrow and grief of the people of the United States in this hour of national tragedy. Terrorism poses the gravest challenge to the stability and progress of contemporary societies. The international community must unite and resolutely fight this evil in all its forms. Itself a victim, Pakistan feels deep indignation at these most barbaric acts of terrorism against the people of the United States. The Government of Pakistan hopes that the perpetrators of these outrageous crimes will be apprehended and punished soon."

Pakistan will participate fully in all international cooperative efforts to this end.

Mr. ONOCHIE (Nigeria): Mr. President, may I, on behalf of my Ambassador and the Government and people of Nigeria, express our most heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the United States over the tragic incidents of 11 September 2001, which occurred in both New York and Washington. Our hearts go out to the families of the victims, their friends and their relations. The Government of Nigeria condemns these despicable acts of terrorism on a huge scale, which have resulted in the huge loss of innocent lives and property. It will stand firmly in support of all efforts to track down and bring to book the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. May God in his infinite mercy give the families, friends and relations of the victims the strength and fortitude to bear this irreparable tragedy. I should add that the President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has already conveyed his condolences to his United States counterpart.

Mr. HOVORKA (Czech Republic): Mr. President, the Government and people of the Czech Republic would like to take this opportunity to join with others in condemning unequivocally and resolutely the terrorist attack against the United States and its people. The United States is the Czech Republic's ally and one with whom we share common democratic and

(Mr. Hovorka, Czech Republic)

human values. The attack launched against the United States is an attack launched against these values and my country stands ready with its partners and the whole international community to do whatever it can to help the United States to get through these difficult times.

In this matter there are a number of questions: Why? Who has committed this barbarous act of violence against human dignity and all peaceful people around the world? Whose interest does it serve? But one thing is clear, and that is, as stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that no just cause can justify any kind of terrorism and we have no doubt that the questions to which I have just referred will be answered very soon and those who are responsible will be found and brought to justice. In conclusion, Mr. President, may I express my country's deepest sympathy to the American people, their Government and the families of the innocent victims of this unprecedented and unjustifiable act of violence.

Mr. KAVSADZE (Georgia) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, members of the Conference, distinguished guests, it is hard - nay, impossible - to say anything regarding this barbarous act of terrorism. It is the common calamity, the shared tragedy of all humankind. The people and Government of Georgia declare their full support for the Government and people of the United States of America.

Mr. ANTONOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, people in Russia were shocked by the terrorist attacks that struck the United States of America. The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, has unequivocally condemned these barbaric acts and expressed condolences to the friends and relatives of the victims. We know at first hand what terrorism is like and we have repeatedly appealed to the international community to combat this scourge. As a sign of solidarity with the United States of America, in memory of the innocent people who perished, a presidential decree has been passed in Russia proclaiming a minute's silence today. I would like to convey to our American colleagues our most sincere condolences and to assure them of our support in these painful times.

Mr. NOBORU (Japan): Mr. President, I would like to join the previous speakers in paying tribute to the skilful leadership demonstrated by you as President of the Conference.

The recent terrorist activities in the United States were a shock to all humankind, including the entire Japanese population. We convey our deepest condolences to the victims and their families.

In a statement following the attacks, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, our Prime Minister, said:

> "These terrorist activities are most serious challenges to the entire democratic society. In order to cope with this challenge to humanity, it is necessary not only to condemn these criminal acts, but to take stern and determined action in reprisal against those who committed them. For this purpose, the Government of Japan is prepared to act together with the United States of America and other allies in the most appropriate way."

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

At the same time, this unfortunate incident is a reminder to us of the importance of globalism, multilateralism and international cooperation, because such terrorist activities can only be prevented through international cooperation.

The work of this Conference is not irrelevant in combating these criminal activities. In this context, I would like to support the statement made by the Australian Ambassador.

We in the Conference on Disarmament should overcome any differences and get to work at the earliest opportunity next year. It is the best way for us, the members of the Conference, to pay respect to the victims of the recent incident. Our role and responsibilities in the Conference on Disarmament become more and more important as we face the common challenge to human beings.

Mr. FAESSLER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, I am very pleased to see you presiding over our destiny in this forum. Words cannot express the horror at the events which occurred in the United States. The world will never be the same again after 11 September 2001. The Swiss Government has condemned those tragic events in the necessary unequivocal terms. Nothing can justify terrorism. But today our thoughts above all lie with the United States Government and its people, and with all the families, friends and relatives affected by those terrible events. At the same time we believe that these events have also demonstrated the urgent need to step up international cooperation, including multilateral cooperation, and perhaps to see peace and security in the world from a new perspective and in a new light. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament can be persuaded by these events to draw fresh breath. Finally, we would like to express the hope that something positive can come out of these tragic events. We hope that the world can return to the fundamental values which guided it in the past, namely, to respect for human life, a sense of justice and the equality of opportunity for all.

Mr. FU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, two days ago, namely, on 11 September, the city of New York and Washington DC, in America suffered severe attacks, causing massive loss of life and injury. We are deeply shocked by the incident. The Chinese Government always condemns and opposes any terrorist violence. President Jiang Zemin sent a telegram that same night to President Bush, to express to him and, through him, to the United States Government and people his profound sympathy and to convey condolences to the families of the victims.

The attacks have not only brought calamity upon the American people, they also challenge the genuine aspirations for peace of peoples of the world. The Chinese people join the American people in vehemently condemning these appalling terrorist attacks. Yesterday, 12 September, in a telephone conversation with President Bush, President Jiang Zemin said that China was closely following the progress of the rescue work, that it stood ready to provide all necessary support and assistance and that it was willing and ready to join the United States and the international community at large in strengthening dialogue and promoting cooperation in a common effort to combat all terrorist violence.

(Mr. Fu, China)

It is our belief that American people will most certainly surmount these current difficulties and will successfully carry out the rehabilitation work and restore social order and normal life as quickly as possible.

Mr. ESENLI (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you on the way you have been conducting the work of the Conference. I am a new member of the Turkish delegation. I wish I had taken the floor on a happier occasion but unfortunately, this is a sad time. You can count on the cooperation and the support of my delegation.

Mr. President, on behalf of my Ambassador, Mr. Murat Sungar, who is in Turkey, I would like to inform the Conference that my Government has already expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the United States Government, victims and their family members for the barbaric and dastardly act which unfolded before our eyes on 11 September. As a friend and ally of the United States, Turkey has already informed the United States Government of its readiness to do whatever is necessary to fight against the barbaric act called terrorism in all its forms. Turkey has suffered tremendously from terrorism. We, therefore, understand the suffering of the American people. The grief of the American people is very close to our hearts. Turkey is ready to cooperate resolutely against terrorism wherever it is, so that similar suffering will not be experienced by the other members of this civilized world.

Mr. SOOD (India): Mr. President, the Government of India at the highest levels has condemned in the strongest terms possible the act of terrorism committed against the people of the United States on 11 September 2001. Terrorism is a scourge that affects not only one country or any one part of the world. It is a plague that affects all parts of the world and is a crime against humanity. We have to join hands to fight this menace and this new proxy war that threatens us all. The Indian Government's decision to cooperate fully with the United States has also been conveyed to the President of the United States. India stands by the people and the Government of the United States of America in this moment of sorrow and resolve.

Mr. MARKRAM (South Africa): South Africa unreservedly denounces the senseless and horrific terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September. President Thabo Mbeki, on behalf of the Government and the people of South Africa, has expressed condolences to President Bush and the Government and the people of the United States during this time of incredible national hardship and grief and also extended sympathy to those who have lost their loved ones in this tragedy. The South African Government has called on the international community to unite against global terrorism and, furthermore, expresses confidence that the United States authorities will ensure that the perpetrators of these dastardly acts face the full might of the law.

Mr. DROFENIK (Slovenia): The Government and people of the Republic of Slovenia strongly condemn the terrorist attacks in New York and in Washington, which are most inhuman acts, not only against the United States of America and the American people, but also against freedom and democracy all over the world. On Tuesday the Government, speaking also on behalf of the people of the Republic of Slovenia, expressed its deep condolences and sympathy

(Mr. Drofenik, Slovenia)

to the American people and to the United States Government and has affirmed its full solidarity with the American people, offering support and assistance, if needed, with the supply of blood and with doctors and specialists in skin transplantation.

Mr. JAKUBOWSKI (Poland): Allow me first to express the appreciation of my delegation for the skilful manner in which your are conducting our proceedings. Mr. President, on behalf of the President, the Government and people of Poland, I should like to convey our most heartfelt condolences to the people of the United States and to the President of the United States, on this tragedy which is impossible to find words to describe. Poland is absolutely united, the Polish people are absolutely united, in condemnation of this barbaric act. The President of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Government have issued statements of deepest solidarity with and also of support for and sympathy with the authorities and the people of the United States. Poland firmly believes that what has happened in New York and Washington is an attack not just against the United States but also a most brutal attack against the values and principles of a democratic free world, as those are the values and principles which the United States has always been so prominent in defending. Poland is an ally of the United States and is ready to do its full share in the battle against terrorism, in the battle for a free democracy and for tolerance.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Distinguished colleagues, today we are to bid farewell to three of our distinguished colleagues: Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany, Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States of America and Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil, who will soon complete their duties as representatives of their respective countries to the Conference on Disarmament.

Ambassador Günther Seibert joined the Conference on Disarmament in May 1997. He has injected into our deliberations a remarkable combination of profound knowledge of the procedural and substantive issues before the Conference and an irrefutable logic and tenacity in fostering consensus on the programme of work. Ambassador Seibert has articulated and upheld the position of his country with authority and elegance. His unshakable commitment to the need to commence negotiations on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, coupled with his willingness to strive for realistic compromises, have been recognized by all. His quintessential quality of moderation and his balanced approach to the priorities attached by members of the Conference to the items on our agenda have been appreciated by us all and earned him well-deserved appointment to the post of Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference, a function which he discharged with dedication and superlative diplomatic skill.

Ambassador Robert Grey has represented his country for almost four years with tenacity, remarkable authority and clarity of vision. We all remember his unwavering commitment to resolving the outstanding issues on the Conference's agenda and, in particular, his persistent efforts to launch negotiations on the prohibition of fissile materials for weapons purposes. During his presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, at the beginning of the 1999 session, Ambassador Grey contributed significantly to our joint endeavour to reach consensus on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and also prepared the ground for admission of

(The President)

the five new members of the Conference, one of them being my own country. His exemplary performance in this function and his diplomatic skills have justly earned him the respect of us all. I am sure that Ambassador Grey will also be remembered for his human qualities, his consummate sense of humour and for those virtues of the folk of Massachusetts which he so amply demonstrates.

Although he has only represented his country at the Conference on Disarmament for two years, Ambassador Celso Amorim has done so with remarkable authority and diplomatic skill, for which he will be remembered for a long time to come. We all owe him a debt of gratitude for his persistent efforts during his tenure as President of the Conference to develop consensus on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. His proposal in this regard, issued in document CD/1624 and generally referred to in this forum as the "Amorim proposal", has been, and still is, unanimously recognized as a basis for further intensified negotiations aimed at overcoming the existing differences in the Conference and ensuring the early commencement of its substantive work.

On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my behalf, I should like to wish Ambassador Seibert, Ambassador Grey and Ambassador Amorim and their families every success in their new duties and happiness for their future.

I have on my list of speakers for today Ambassador Anda Filip, the representative of Romania, Ambassador Jean Lint, the representative of Belgium, who will speak on behalf of the European Union, Ambassador Robert Grey, the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Günther Seibert, the representative of Germany, and Ambassador Celso Amorim, the representative of Brazil. I now give them the floor.

Ms. FILIP (Romania): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your distinguished tenure, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference, as well as on the way in which you have been discharging the special responsibility of President at the conclusion of this session. I also congratulate you on the skilful manner in which you have been conducting the drafting of the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the United Nations General Assembly.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate your predecessors on their intensive and constructive efforts aimed at moving the work of the Conference forward.

Mr. President, I had asked for the floor in order to address the issue of the Ottawa Convention and the manner in which my Government is implementing its commitments, in view of the forthcoming Meeting of the State parties in Managua. I feel, however, that I cannot speak today, just two days after the tragic and shocking events in New York and Washington, without first expressing - on behalf of the entire Romanian people - our deep sorrow and compassion for the terrible human loss and pain suffered by the people of the United States of America.

The President and the Government of Romania have strongly condemned these cowardly acts of terrorism. It is now clearer than ever that international terrorism is a major and palpable

(Ms. Filip, Romania)

threat to peace and security in the world, and we count on the contribution of all responsible States in fighting against this evil, which strikes at the fundamental values of civilization, democracy and freedom.

I would now like to join the previous distinguished delegations who addressed the issue of the Ottawa Convention in this chamber in congratulating the States which have recently signed or ratified the instrument, as well as those which have recently concluded the process of destruction of APL stockpiles. I would like also to commend the intense and constructive efforts displayed during the inter-sessional period by the Norwegian presidency, the delegations of Belgium and Zimbabwe as well as all the co-chairs and co-rapporteurs of the standing committees.

My Government shares the view that, since it entered into force, a great deal of progress has been achieved in expanding the adherence of States to the Ottawa Convention, as well as in the process of reducing the number of APLs and, implicitly, the number of victims around the world. At the same time, however, much still remains to be done and we look forward to the forthcoming Meeting of the States parties as a reconfirmation of this highly positive political momentum.

Romania is determined to provide a standing contribution to the Ottawa process, both by domestic measures of implementation of the commitments that we have undertaken and by active involvement in the inter-sessional work.

Although for my country the Convention came into force only on 1 May of this year, I am honoured and proud to inform you and the distinguished delegations that the process of destruction by the Romania army of the country's APL stockpile commenced on 31 August 2001 when a first lot of 10,000 mines was destroyed. The event took place in the presence of the Government officials, diplomats and military attachés accredited in Bucharest. A detailed presentation was made on that occasion regarding the composition and technical features of Romania's APL holdings, which, in all, total 1,076,000.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Romania for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Jean Lint, who will be speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. LINT (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, before making the following statement in Belgium's capacity as President of the European Union, I would like to express our thanks to the Ambassador of Romania for her statement and to provide the following information. The Government of Nicaragua, in consultation with its fellow organizers, has decided to keep the Managua meeting on its original dates, 18-21 September 2001, while remaining mindful of the travel difficulties associated with the tragic events in the United States. As one of the organizers, we were of the opinion that, even though we were all shocked by the recent terrorist acts, this should not be allowed to deter us from our mission clearing the world of anti-personnel mines, which continue to claim tens of thousands of innocent victims every year.

(Mr. Lint, Belgium)

Now, Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union, namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the associated States of Cyprus and Malta, align themselves with this statement.

The year 2001 was yet another year of paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament, which has failed to get its work under way. While paying tribute to the successive Presidents, who spared no effort in seeking a compromise solution, the European Union can only deeply regret this state of affairs.

Document CD/1624 submitted by our friend Ambassador Amorim is in the eyes of the European Union a good basis for our discussions. We are grateful to Ambassador Reyes for having succeessfully distilled a non-contentious element from that document and we welcome the appointment of the three special coordinators, who have immediately set to work on the tasks entrusted to them. The European Union hopes that the work of the special coordinators will continue and is in favour of their reappointment next year.

I would like to recall here the importance which the European Union attaches to the process of enlarging the Conference on Disarmament, particularly to include those member States of the European Union and associated countries which are not yet members and wish to join its ranks. Even though it has been said on many occasions, the European Union wishes to reaffirm its faith in multilateralism and to repeat that the Conference on Disarmament constitutes the sole multilateral forum available to the international community for negotiations on disarmament issues. The continuing paralysis in this forum only serves to weaken the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

This situation impedes the immediate launching of negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty related to the production of nuclear weapons and other explosive nuclear devices (FMCT), as well as the consideration of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) in subsidiary organs with mandates that should be both practical and substantive if they are to be universally accepted.

With the full implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, negotiations on FMCT are now key to making any fresh headway towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The need for such negotiations was reaffirmed in May 2000 by all the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty during the Review Conference. Notwithstanding the delay that has already occurred, the European Union continues to attach paramount importance to the opening of negotiations on FMCT at the beginning of the 2002 session of the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to their conclusion within five years.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Mr. President, I want to thank you and my colleagues for the expressions of support and the condolences addressed to me as the representative of the United States. These terrorist acts will be dealt with as they deserve. As others who attacked us in the past found out to their regret those who carried out these acts will

(Mr. Grey, United States)

soon discover that they have roused a sleeping giant. That is all I want to say for now, for talk is cheap, and our future actions will speak for themselves. But back to the subject at hand.

As many of you already know, this is my last plenary meeting as the representative of the United States of America to the Conference on Disarmament. I will soon leave public life after 41 years in the diplomatic service of my country.

But the habits of a lifetime will not change. In 1960 I took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Although I shall continue to do that, my focus will inevitably shift from the international arena to the domestic one.

During my life of diplomatic service, I have had the privilege of making many friends and working closely with highly skilled colleagues, including those who have shared their insights and goals with me during my four years in Geneva. In personal terms my life here has been highly satisfying, but from a professional perspective, it has been exceedingly frustrating.

For the last three years, the Conference on Disarmament has done nothing that would justify its existence. Throughout this extended agony of inactivity and decay, the Conference has been tied in knots by an adamant insistence that negotiations in an area where consensus exists - and where consensus has repeatedly been reaffirmed - must be linked to, and held hostage to, proposals to launch negotiations in other areas where consensus does not exist and is unlikely to emerge for quite some time, if ever.

In years gone by, the international community's sole standing body for negotiating multilateral arms control agreements actually carried out significant and useful work. Whether it will be able to do so in the future is highly debatable.

I am confident that arms control agreements will continue to be negotiated somewhere. Those countries most directly concerned can arrange to do that in other places and by other methods. They are not obliged to choose Geneva in general, nor the Conference on Disarmament in particular.

The time has come for those who have tied this body in knots to decide whether or not they want to be part of that process.

My country takes its NPT responsibilities very seriously and will always be called upon to play a significant role in arms control negotiations. But many other member States do no have that assurance. In practice, the Conference on Disarmament may be the only negotiating forum in which their voices will be heard and their concerns addressed.

At this stage, only 15 member States have seen fit to appoint ambassadors whose full energy and attention are available for the work of the Conference. If this Conference remains hog-tied, that number will diminish. After further decay, fewer and fewer Governments will send capable and well qualified delegates to attend to their interests in this body. Governments simply will not send first-rate people to twiddle their thumbs in a moribund institution.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

Successive presidents of the Conference built on each others' insights, eventually producing a plausible mechanism for getting the Conference back to work. Yet this accretive and progressive process effectively ended on 24 August 2000, when Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil tabled the work programme proposals contained in CD/1624. If we do not move collectively to grasp that opportunity soon, this institution will become even more irrelevant in the future than it has been for the last four years, and inevitably the business of disarmament will shift to other venues.

Institutions that do not, cannot, or simply will not work end up being discarded. I hope that that will not be the fate of the Conference, but I have little grounds to be optimistic about its future.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Mr. President, at the outset, allow me to say that I am stunned and appalled by the despicable terrorist attack against the United States, which has taken such a horrendous toll of human lives. Deeply grieved, I should like to express my deep sympathy and sincere condolences to the families of the victims as well as to the American people and the United States Government.

Mr. President, I thank you for the kind words and good wishes you have addressed to me. At the same time, I should like to congratulate you on smoothly concluding this difficult session of the Conference in 2001. All your predecessors this year deserve credit for their courageous efforts to overcome the stalemate in the Conference.

Today is my opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament, to share some reflections, to bid farewell and to extend my sincere best wishes to all.

More than a decade ago we all welcomed the end of the cold war. The end of the East-West conflict also marked a halt to the nuclear arms race, dispelling the danger of a global nuclear conflagration. New opportunities were created for closer political and economic cooperation throughout Europe, including new pan-European security structures. As one of the main beneficiaries of these fundamental changes, Germany was able to achieve its reunification. The Conference on Disarmament emerged from the shadows of the cold war to produce some of the finest achievements of its history - the CWC and the CTBT.

When I joined this body in spring 1997, I was still confident that the political will and the momentum of the early 1990s could be revived to produce another important disarmament instrument. Unfortunately, these hopes have never been realized. The establishment of an ad hoc committee was the closest that we ever came to the long overdue negotiations on an FMCT. This was a disappointment.

It is a truism that the Conference on Disarmament can easily become hostage to problems and developments outside the Conference. The international community has been unable to make best use of the opportunities created by the end of the cold war: major regional conflicts have remained unresolved. New conflicts have erupted. Key players are pursuing diverging policies on how to enhance global security and stability in the post-cold-war era.

(Mr.Seibert, Germany)

All this has not facilitated the efforts of this Conference to engage in substantive work. It would be naive to believe that, by merely improving the working methods of the Conference on Disarmament or updating its agenda, a breakthrough on key outstanding substantive issues could be achieved.

Conversely, it would be all too easy to blame outside events for all the deficiencies and failures of this body. It is hardly comprehensible that our agenda is almost the same as it was 20 years ago, at the height of the cold war. Instead of addressing emerging new issues of global security and humanitarian concern, such as anti-personnel mines, small arms and missiles, the Conference on Disarmament has become bogged down in fruitless debates over its priorities. In the meantime, these pressing issues have moved away from the Conference to be dealt with in other forums.

The working methods of the Conference on Disarmament as they have evolved over the past few years have introduced additional rigidities in an already over-regulated body. We have all experienced to our cost that the all-or-nothing approach of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work is bound to end in an impasse.

The existing group system, rather than facilitating consultations, is providing cover for a few delegations which do not want seriously to address any issue except for their specific priorities. This renders the already daunting task of our presidents even more difficult. The Conference needs more transparency and more interaction between like-minded delegations, both within and across group lines.

Efforts by the Conference to improve its working methods and to update its agenda must be continued with the assistance of special coordinators. Moreover, the Conference should not shy away from a debate on issues which are not yet mature for negotiation. Disarmament treaties are not created overnight. They require a painstaking process of deliberation, consensus-building and negotiation. While we have no guarantee that deliberations will produce a substantive outcome, continuing silence and stalemate are not sensible alternatives. They are bound to remain sterile.

The Conference on Disarmament has not outlived its days. It remains as indispensable as ever and its greatest tasks may still lie ahead. Rapid and widespread technological advances make us increasingly interdependent but also more vulnerable. This requires shared efforts aiming at global norms - especially disarmament norms. Our goal must be a better and safer world for all nations, large or small, through solidarity, cooperation and co-action. The Conference on Disarmament cannot afford to act as a relic of a long bygone world. It must tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century. In this spirit, I fully subscribe to the statement by Ambassador Lint on behalf of the European Union.

After having highlighted some of the sore spots of this body I would like now to pay tribute to its unique strength - that is, the quality of its members. It has been a singular honour and privilege for me to work with so many colleagues with outstanding intellectual capacity, combined with a profound knowledge of disarmament matters, as well as exemplary professional

(Mr.Seibert, Germany)

skills and experience. The Conference on Disarmament is probably the global forum with the highest potential in terms of the quality of its members - regrettably, it may also be the most underutilized at this juncture.

Mr. President, I thank you and all colleagues for the fine cooperation and the friendship I have been able to build with many present and past colleagues. In addition, I would like to express special thanks to our Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and his deputy, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, as well as to all members of our highly professional and dedicated secretariat for their advice and support. I am grateful to the interpreters for their unfailing commitment and tolerance. Finally, I want publicly to acknowledge on this occasion the invaluable contributions made by the members of my mission. My gratitude goes to Klaus Achenbach, Stefan Kordasch, Gerhard Schepe and Achim Holzenberger, who have all demonstrated outstanding professional and personal qualities.

This concludes my four and a half years in Geneva. I wish the Conference and you all individually the very best for the future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Celsor Amorim.

Mr. AMORIM (Brazil): Mr. President, you will certainly understand if my first words are words of sympathy and condolences addressed to the United States delegation. Like virtually every nation in the world, Brazil was shocked by the abhorrent terrorist acts in New York and Washington, which cost so many innocent lives. We join the United States Government and people in this tragic moment of mourning. These attacks - and I say this not only as a figure of rhetoric - did not aim solely at the United States, but at all civilized peoples and nations. As was clear from the statements that we have heard today, they succeeded in raising general indignation.

When expressing his sympathy, President Cardoso vehemently condemned all forms of terrorism and reiterated Brazil's support for all cooperative efforts on the part of the international community in order to eradicate these barbaric practices, which are totally incompatible with an international order based on justice.

Mr. President, I thank you sincerely for the kind words and the good wishes you addressed to me. May I also extend to you my warmest congratulations for the way you have presided over this Conference and so competently conducted the drafting of its annual report. I feel great satisfaction to see you in the Chair, the Permanent Representative of a country so close to Brazil and someone who has a strong personal attachment to my country. I wish to extend my appreciation for the work done by your predecessors in the presidency, as well as to congratulate the three special coordinators, who so competently performed their functions.

(Mr. Amorim, Brazil)

This is perhaps less a moment for lengthy statements than for introspection. We are duty-bound to scrutinize some of the notions - security, stability, vulnerability - that have underlined our analysis hitherto. This is a task that requires time and, as much as possible, dispassionate reflection. But since this is probably the last occasion for me to address this august body, I considered that I should make some very brief comments on the work of the Conference.

The Conference on Disarmament is now coming to the end of another annual session without a programme of work.

Perhaps there is nothing extraordinary in this, since the lack of consensus has actually been the pattern in the Conference. But deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament for the third consecutive year is, nevertheless, more than a bad signal. By failing to adopt a programme of work, we are failing in our mission: to negotiate treaties in the field of global disarmament. Likewise, for the great majority of us, we are also not responding to the two calls of the 2000 NPT Review Conference: namely, to start negotiations on a fissile material treaty and to establish an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. We are also postponing the establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with the prevention of an arms race in outer space, an issue to which we have been ascribing great importance. In any event, I cannot but commend the efforts of all presidents in trying to move the Conference back to work, in spite of all the all-too-familiar difficulties.

When looking at the report of the 2001 annual session, I am seized by an ambivalent feeling.

On the one hand, I feel honoured to see that we are recommending that document CD/1624 - a document that was drafted during the Brazilian presidency in August 2000 - will remain a reference text for the Conference in its search for consensus on a programme of work. On the other hand, the mere fact that this document remains on the table, after more than one year has elapsed, is evidence of our collective failure. And nobody likes to be associated with failure.

The recommendation that the three special coordinators be reappointed at the beginning of the 2002 annual session can have a positive impact on the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and we also commend Ambassador Reyes on his endeavours in this regard. But this should not divert our attention from our main objective: to find a solution for the deadlock in the Conference and to enable it to play its role in the global process of disarmament, and accordingly in global peace, as the sole multilateral body that can negotiate measures in this field.

When I came to elaborate the draft that is now embodied in document CD/1624, based on my predecessors' and, to a considerable extent, on Ambassador Lint's work and on my intensive consultations, I tried to explore the limits of the possible. I sought to arrive at a formula that could offer something to everybody, but not everything to anybody in particular. As my presidency came to a close, I alluded to a problem of perception and I am still convinced that, with the right attitude, each member of the Conference on Disarmament would be able to put the

(Mr. Amorim, Brazil)

programme of work to use in a way that would be beneficial to all, while preserving individual interests perceived as fundamental. It would seem that my arguments were not good enough to persuade some members of this fact or to change their perceptions. But the effort must go on, in the hope that some new fact, especially in the relationship among the main protagonists, may reduce the level of suspicion and allow members to re-engage in serious work in the Conference on Disarmament.

One of the most gratifying experiences during my tenure was participation in the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which successfully adopted an action plan for nuclear disarmament. I am sure that many colleagues here share this same feeling. Brazil attaches the utmost importance to the results of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and is committed to pursuing the objectives contained in its Final Document. At the same time, we are concerned at the uncertainty regarding its implementation - just one manifestation of which is the deadlock in the Conference.

Brazil agrees that it is not only nuclear weapons which pose a threat to peace - the tragic events in the United States last Tuesday are a proof to the contrary. But we are firmly convinced that, as long as there are nuclear weapons, true international security and stability will remain elusive.

The failure of other multilateral processes in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in 2001 makes us even more concerned at the way the multilateral system as a whole is evolving - or, indeed, not evolving. This is all the more distressing as we continue to believe that multilateral cooperation is the only sure path to a stable and secure international system.

Mr. President, frustration notwithstanding, the Conference on Disarmament has been a gratifying experience for me, both from 1991 to 1993, and, more recently, from 1999 to 2001. Thanks to alphabetical circumstances, I was allowed to preside twice over this body, first at the beginning of 1993 and, now, in July-August 2000. Here I learned a great deal and made lasting friendships among colleagues and members of the secretariat. I shall not list all of them, but I think it is appropriate to name Mr. Petrovsky.

On this occasion, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to all colleagues, for their friendship, to all members of the secretariat, for all their constant help, as well as to the interpreters and translators, for their contribution and patience. I take this opportunity to welcome the new Permanent Representatives and delegates who joined this privileged body in 2001, and finally, let me express my best wishes to all of you and to the Conference for the next year.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Is there any other delegation that wishes to take the floor? The representative of Nigeria, Mr. Onochie, has the floor.

Mr. ONOCHIE (Nigeria): Mr. President, as I hardly need point out, you have been doing a very good job. I would not want to miss this opportunity today when three disarmament giants are going to take leave of us. I am talking specifically about the distinguished ambassadors of the United States, Germany and Brazil. It is very significant that, in their farewell statements, they have expressed their concerns about the current stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. I would, however, like to state for the record that the problem of the Conference on Disarmament does not lie with its rules of procedure or its working mechanisms. The issue is the lack of political will by some delegations. Once political will is displayed, the Conference will move forward. May I seize this opportunity to wish them a restful assignment elsewhere.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I now invite you to formalize the provisional agreements reached at the informal plenary meetings on the draft annual report, as contained in document CD/WP.520 together with the revisions contained in document CD/WP.521, and I would like to announce that a new document will be added to chapter III, section H, of the report: CD/1650, which was submitted on 12 September 2001 and entitled "Letter dated 10 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament transmitting the English and Russian texts of the Final Memorandum of the international conference 'XXI Century - Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World' held on 29-31 August 2001 in Almaty, Kazakhstan".

Since we were able to go through the draft annual report paragraph by paragraph at the informal plenary meeting held on Tuesday, 4 September 2001, and since we went through the revisions contained in document CD/WP.521 last Tuesday, I shall now proceed to the formal adoption of our annual report as a whole and as revised.

May I take it that the annual report in its entirety, as contained in document CD/WP.520 and as revised by document CD/WP.521, is adopted?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The secretariat will issue the report as an official document of the Conference in all official languages as soon as possible.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If not, I should like to inform the Conference that, as provided for in rule 9 of the rules of procedure, representatives of the following member States will preside over the Conference in the year 2002: Egypt, from 1 January to 17 February; Ethiopia, from 18 February to 17 March; Finland, from 18 March to 26 May; France, from 27 May to 23 June; Germany, from 24 June to 18 August; and Hungary, from 19 August to 31 December 2002. Now that we have heard comments and conclusions with regard to the situation in the Conference, I would like to make my own concluding comments as we come to the end of this 2001 session.

I shall not undertake to go into any detail about the state of affairs in the Conference, an issue which has been constantly under discussion for some three years now. Today the

(The President)

Conference on Disarmament is concluding its third consecutive year of meetings without reaching agreement on a programme of work and, therefore, without being able to launch multilateral negotiations on substantive matters, or to establish subsidiary bodies. This situation is the cause of great concern to all delegations, in view of the ever-increasing likelihood that the credibility and the very structure of this sole forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations will be eroded.

I have also taken note of the conviction of delegations that the Conference on Disarmament has proved incapable of commencing negotiations and this for reasons to be sought not only within or outside the organization itself but also contingent on issues political and structural - but above all political.

To counter the pessimistic atmosphere prevailing in the Conference on Disarmament, I deemed it necessary to impart a sense of urgency to approval of the programme of work, since I believe that efforts must henceforth be focused at a higher political level if we are to endeavour to bring the Conference on Disarmament out of its state of paralysis.

I have noted that many delegations have remained silent and that the groups, in their turn, have continued to repeat their positions on the programme of work, which, in my estimation, has not been conducive to increasing the effective pressure applied by the non-nuclear States on certain key players.

All the members of the Conference on Disarmament clearly aspire to the attainment of peace and share the goals of collective security. These goals are, however, being moved further away from the international community by disturbing phenomena on the strategic landscape and by the escalation of violence and terror, which has reached an unprecedented level.

The abominable acts of terrorism perpetrated in the United States caught us unawares and struck fear in our hearts. But at the same time they move us to reflect on the need for the Conference on Disarmament to establish as soon as possible more effective measures to ensure international peace and security, thus banishing the spectre of nuclear annihilation.

I have reported to you on the consultations which I have undertaken to resolve the issue of continuing the work of the special coordinators. The most important factor emerging from these consultations was the approval of the recommendation already included in the Conference's annual report to the United Nations General Assembly. I take this opportunity to congratulate the three special coordinators, Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria, Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, for the outstanding work that they have performed.

My delegation considers that the Conference on Disarmament cannot abandon its priorities relating to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and the negotiation of legal instruments on ceasing the production of fissile materials, on nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as well as the establishment of subsidiary bodies at the earliest possible opportunity.

(The President)

Distinguished delegates, in conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to all those colleagues who extended their warm welcome to me and shared with me their experience in these matters. I would like to mention in particular the constant support I have received from Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference. My gratitude goes to Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, and to the secretariat staff, who worked with me throughout my tenure of the presidency. I thank the interpreters for their valuable services during the meetings of the Conference and in the consultations.

This concludes our business for today and the 2001 session of the Conference on Disarmament. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 22 January 2002, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.